

**Working together
for a safer Scotland**



**SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

Working together for a safer Scotland

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Thematic Report

SFRS Staffing – Aberdeen City

Safety. Teamwork. Respect. Innovation.

1. Background

The purpose of this report is to provide committee members with an understanding of how the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS), maintains operational readiness through our dedicated crewing models.

Within Aberdeen City, the SFRS maintains operational readiness by employing two distinct crewing models; Wholetime and On-call. These models are deployed across four stations; Altens, Central, North Anderson Drive crewed by wholetime personnel and Dyce by On-call personnel.

To further enhance both crewing models, Aberdeen City Senior Command team consisting of senior officers are assigned to a Flexi Duty Officer (FDO) crewing model. This model ensures that adequate command and control can be applied to all incident types and sizes.

2. Crewing Models and Target Operating Model

Wholetime Crewing Model:

Wholetime firefighters are employed on a full-time contract to provide operational cover within our wholetime fire stations as part of the 5-watch duty system. Personnel are split across 5 watch colours, working 42 hrs per week over 2 dayshifts and 2 nightshifts, within a 7-week cycle.

Wholetime firefighters provide an emergency response to a variety of calls including incidents such; Fire, Road Traffic Collisions, Transport (Trains, Planes), Rope Rescue, Water Rescue, Hazardous Materials, Urban Search and Rescue (collapsed structure).

Wholetime personnel not only attend emergency calls, but also contribute to keeping our communities safe through community education activities such as; home fire safety visit, post incident response support, school interventions, High rise and care home inspections etc.

On-Call Crewing Model:

The On-call crewing model is a service for the community, provided by the community and we could not keep Scotland safe without our dedicated On-call crews.

Our On-call firefighters provide the same full range of emergency services as their Wholetime colleagues – and generally carry out these duties whilst holding primary employment in various other fields.

This can mean our personnel bring a wide variety of experience to the role and an example of these wide ranging of roles include; Hoteliers, Bank Managers, Gym Instructors, Project Administrators and Joiners etc.

Our On-call crews not only attend emergency calls, but also contribute to keeping our communities safe through community education activities in line with their wholetime colleagues.

Our On-call colleagues undertake a commitment to provide operational cover within their local community on either a 75% (90hrs pw) or 100% (120hrs pw) contract depend on the needs of their primary employment. This also includes attending regular weekly training events held at their local fire station for 2.5hrs per session, ensuring competencies and firefighter safety is maintained.

Flexi Duty Officer Crewing Model:

Our Senior Officer cadre provide operational cover and support 24hrs a day. Not only does our Senior Command team undertake the management of Service Delivery, Fire Safety Enforcement, Prevention and Protection, Training, Safety and Assurance, they also provided operational response.

FDOs provide a response to all incident types providing additional support and Command and Control. Each FDO also provides tactical support and advise via their individual specialist skill base. These include role such as;

- HAZMAT Advisors
- Detection, Identification and Monitoring (DIM)
- Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear Advisors (CBRN)
- National Interagency Liaison Officers (NILO)
- Fire Investigation (FI)
- Accident Investigation (AI)
- Media Officers
- Tactical Loggist

Aberdeen City Staffing:

The Aberdeen Local Authority Area is served by 4 Community Fire and Rescue stations, Altens, Central, North Anderson Drive - Wholetime and 1 On-call station at Dyce.



SFRS sites within Aberdeen city also include; The North Service Delivery Area HQ (Dyce), Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray LSO Area HQ (Central) and the North Area Training Centre (Portlethen).

Our target operating model for Aberdeen City across both Wholetime and On-call frontline staff is 168. As of September 2022, our establishment is 161, to which we are actively recruiting to fill these vacancies.

Target Operating Model					
	Altens	Central	N.A.D	Dyce	
Firefighter	35	38	32	9	114
Crew Commander	10	15	10	3	38
Watch Commander	5	5	5	1	16
	50	58	47	13	168
Actual Operating Model (Sept 2022)					
	Altens	Central	N.A.D	Dyce	
Firefighter	33	36	32	7	108
Crew Commander	10	15	10	2	37
Watch Commander	5	5	5	1	16
	48	56	47	10	161 (-7)

To ensure effective and sufficient resourcing, our appliance availability is managed utilising electronic online roster systems, Kronos (wholetime/FDOs) and Gartan (On-call). These online systems allow SFRS operations control and command teams to make fast strategic decisions about staff and resource availability in real-time.

Due to nature of the On-call environment and changes within how our local communities function, it has become more challenging in recent years to recruit and maintain appliance availability within the On-call environment. This can be evidenced as a greater number of the population no longer work within their local areas due to a decline in traditional local work sectors such as; retail, hospitality, manufacturing etc.

3. Recruitment

Due to the nature of On-call and the aforementioned challenges, the SFRS inherently experiences a high a turnover of employee's year to year.

Our On-call recruitment programme is a continuous process that is open to candidates all year, thus allowing the SFRS to quickly progress any identified areas of need. Our recruitment process is an online process which allows for greater sharing and recording of information between candidates and local SFRS management teams.

Our recruitment programme is designed to ensure that all candidates meet the required medical, fitness and educational standards to undertake the role of Firefighter.

Within the Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray LSO area, our management teams continually work to ensure that sufficient area cover be maintained. This has been

achieved by local management teams working closely with local crews and On-call Support Watch Commander to identify innovative recruitment initiatives. These initiatives have been used to identify the needs of the local communities we serve and how we can change to meet them.

4. How the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Is Working to Improve On-call Employment

In 2020 the SFRS introduced the National Retained and Volunteer Leadership forum. The aims and objectives of the forum was to bring together all elements and functions within the SFRS to support and evolve the On-call system, while undertaken continuous consultation with our On-call colleagues.

Initial consultation with our On-call colleagues has identified need for change and as such, our service introduced the 'On-call Improvement Programme'.

Our On-Call Improvement Programme has been divided into three key projects;

1. Attraction & Recruitment Improvement Project.
2. Responding Options & Duty Systems Relationships Project.
3. Variable Contracts and Station Establishments Project.

Actions that have undertaken to date;

- Formation of the On-call Support Group
- Pre-Recruitment Engagement Programme (PREP)
- On-call Improvement Programme
- Standardisation of On-call T&Cs Consultation (ongoing)
- Implementation and employment of On-call Support Watch Commanders (54).

5. Conclusion

The report provides the Committee with a briefing on the principle crewing models deployed by the SFRS to maintain operational readiness.

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service will continue to work towards improving how we delivery our services to our communities.

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service will continue to improve on prevention, protection and response, to ensure the safety and wellbeing of people throughout Scotland.